

ATTACHMENT 4.9(c): Cooperation And Coordination With Other Agencies And Other Entities

(1): Cooperation with Agencies That Are Not in the Statewide Workforce Investment System and with Other Entities

The Division of Disability, Aging and Rehabilitative Services/Vocational Rehabilitation Services seeks interagency cooperation with a number of agencies and entities that are not partners required by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. These include: Centers for Independent Living and Independent Living Programs, Community Rehabilitation Programs, the Division of Mental Health, the Division of Family and Children, Department of Education, Transportation, Bureau of Aging and In-Home Services, Bureau of Developmental Disabilities, Client Assistance Program

Centers for Independent Living and Independent Living Programs: The Division of Disability, Aging and Rehabilitative Services/Vocational Rehabilitation Services has a close working relationship with Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and Independent Living Programs in Indiana. VRS staff makes referrals to CILs and programs and Center staff and program staff refer individuals to Vocational Rehabilitation Services. A VR Area Supervisor is a member of the Advisory Task Force for the Northern Independent Living (NIIL) Program (Title VII, Chapter 2). A staff person from the Indianapolis Resource Center for Independent Living is a member of the VR redesign team that is currently evaluating the VR program with an emphasis on customer service. Center Director's have input into the joint decision that the agency and the Indiana Council on Independent Living make in terms of funding levels for Centers and programs in Indiana.

Community Rehabilitation Programs: The Division of Disability, Aging, and Rehabilitative Services/Vocational Rehabilitation Services has a close working relationship with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs). There are Purchase of Service Agreements with 64 programs and field staff interact daily with CRP staff. Vocational Rehabilitation Services' staff and CRP staff are involved in local planning councils for the benefit of individuals with disabilities. A joint training initiative to increase employment outcomes is planned for VRS and CRP staff during FFY 1999.

Division of Mental Health: The Division of Disability, Aging and Rehabilitative Services/Vocational Rehabilitation Services works

closely with the Division of Mental Health (DMH) in assuring that adequate counseling and support services are available to individuals with mental illness. In addition, the agency works with DHM to assure that follow-along resources are available to individuals in supported employment. The Divisions collaborate on funding opportunities for Mental Health Centers in the community.

Division of Family and Children: The Division of Disability, Aging and Rehabilitative Services/Vocational Rehabilitation Services works with the Division of Family and Children (DFC) in assuring that DFC services support the employment services that VRS is providing. These include Medicaid eligibility as a comparable service, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Food Stamps, Energy Assistance Program, Housing and Weatherization Assistance.

Department of Education: The Division of Disability, Aging and Rehabilitative Services/Vocational Rehabilitation Services works with the Department of Education in providing school to work transition services which are discussed later in this attachment.

Transportation: The Division of Disability, Aging and Rehabilitative Services/Vocational Rehabilitation Services works with a number of transportation providers to better assure adequate transportation for individuals receiving services through the VR program. VRS field staff work with local transportation providers such as Metro in the Indianapolis area to expedite a means in which individuals will have access to bus tickets. In addition, staff advocate for accessible and reliable transportation for individuals in their communities.

Bureau of Aging and In-Home Services: Vocational Rehabilitation Services works closely with The Bureau of Aging and In-Home Services to assure that the services they provide are available to support vocational services. This includes the use of the Medicaid Waiver for follow-along, support services, and home based care.

Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services: Vocational Rehabilitation Services works with the Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services (BDDS) in ensuring follow along dollars are available for individuals in supported employment and residential options for individuals. The Bureau and VRS are also working closely in establishing a common definition for SD/MSD and BDDS eligibility, and ensure a smooth transition of individuals from

state institutions to community living and a person centered planning approach.

Client Assistance Program: The Division of Disability, Aging and Rehabilitative Services/Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Client Assistance Program (CAP) work together by meeting quarterly to discuss pertinent issues, identifying training needs and collaborating in training opportunities.

(2): Coordination with Education Officials

Transition Services are for the purpose of providing a planned, efficient movement of students with disabilities from secondary (high) school to work and/or further education or technical training. The Division of Disability, Aging, and Rehabilitative Services continues to work closely with the Department of Education to improve the quality of Transition Services being provided, and implement the requirements of Federal and State legislation.

A summary of the previous year's activities and accomplishments follows:

Vocational Rehabilitation Services continues to track and collect data related to transition services on a monthly basis. In FFY 98, 8.7% of the total served by our agency were transition students, and 8.6% of all successful closures were transition students. See chart below.

FFY 98	TRANSITION	TOTAL
SERVED 02-30	2,676	30,715
STATUS 26	356	4,141

We continue to track students who are identified in the 8th grade by local schools as possibly needing the services of Vocational Rehabilitation Services upon graduation. We monitor the progress of these students on an annual basis and provide basic information to students and their parents regarding Vocational Rehabilitation Services. As of the end of calendar year 1998, there were a total of 9,660 students being tracked in 00 status as potentially eligible Vocational Rehabilitation Services consumers/students.

Under "Cooperative Agreements With Other Public Agencies", we entered into agreements with four (4) local Special Education

Planning Districts during school year 98-99 to improve or develop transition services for eligible Vocational Rehabilitation Services customers/students. These agreements provide funding for schools to hire staff involved in transition services such as job coaches. Funding is for the purpose of supporting year round programs which provide job placement services, job coaching, job experiences and assistance with planning to insure a successful transition from high school to higher education or employment for eligible Vocational Rehabilitation Services consumers/students. Local Special Education Planning Districts provide the local matching funds of 21.3%. We have current agreements, which range from \$81,496 to \$176,000 and total \$544,676. One of the Special Education Planning Districts is in its third year of funding and the other three are in their fourth year of funding. It is our intent to provide funding for a period of four years for these projects.

Our local Vocational Rehabilitation Services offices have entered into cooperative agreements with 63 out of 65 local Special Education Planning Districts in the state of Indiana. These local agreements identify areas of responsibilities and how parties will coordinate services to ensure a smooth transition from school to work. We are working with the State Department of Education to encourage the remaining two (2) Special Education Planning Districts to sign the local agreements in their communities. Local cooperative agreements are not required but strongly encouraged.

The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act and the Rehabilitation Act require that education agencies and Vocational Rehabilitation Services programs work together in the provision of transition services and the coordination of the Individual Education Plan, Individual Transition Plan and the Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan. Indiana has passed State legislation, which mandates that local schools and Vocational Rehabilitation Services offices coordinate certain activities related to transition. These specific State mandated activities are as follows:

1. At the eighth grade annual case conferences for students in special education, students who potentially will be eligible and need Vocational Rehabilitation Services are identified. These students and their parents receive written information about Vocational Rehabilitation Services at that time and in a follow-up letter.

2. For students identified as potentially needing Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the school transmits to the local Vocational Rehabilitation Services office student identification information, to include identifying the student's disability and the projected year of graduation.

3. Vocational Rehabilitation Services tracks the student's progress by:

- A. Reviewing the information not less than one (1) time each twelve (12) months,
- B. Contacting the school corporation at regular intervals to be appraised of the student's academic progress,
- C. Performing the duties of advocate and consultant to the student and family,
- D. Promoting communication with the student and family by attending, with adequate notice, activities such as career days, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation nights, case conferences upon invitation, and other consultative services on behalf of the student.

4. The Vocational Rehabilitation Services Counselor is entitled to receive an invitation to the annual case conference held during the school year before the projected final year of school. **This invitation serves as an official referral.**

5. At the annual case conference during the next to last school year, the committee shall review adult services that are available to the student, and the process to be followed to access those adult services. A Vocational Rehabilitation Services application is to be taken at that time or shortly thereafter.

New state legislation regarding transition services was developed and introduced in the current session of the legislature. This legislation better identifies responsibilities and provides more flexibility based upon the needs of the student.

Both the Indiana Department of Education and Vocational Rehabilitation Services are providing funding to continue funding the Indiana Transition Initiative. This initiative was begun with a Grant under the title "Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities". This was a five year U.S. Department of Education grant award for approximately \$500,000.00 per year "to effect broad improvement in the quality and availability of transition services to all students with disabilities and to undertake the needed changes in the structure of state and local systems to support those improvements." Since Federal funds have ended, the

Department of Education and Vocational Rehabilitation Services plan to continue the project with the major emphasis upon technical assistance and training.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services continues to work with other state agencies such as Workforce Development and, in particular, the Department of Education. There is a formal interagency cooperative agreement between the Family and Social Services Administration and the Department of Education. A committee composed of representatives of the Department of Education, Workforce Development and Vocational Rehabilitation Services was recently formed to up-date the current interagency cooperative agreement to include Workforce Development, and address the needs of students with disabilities in regular education. Representatives of Vocational Rehabilitation Services serve as members of the Special Education Advisory Committee, Indiana Transition Initiative Policy Advisory Council, and the Workforce Development School to Work Committee.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services is working with Workforce Development in implementing the School-to-Work Opportunity System Project. Vocational Rehabilitation central office and field staff are involved in the development of School-to Work grant proposals in order to ensure the needs of students with disabilities are addressed under this project. Staff are currently involved in discussions regarding how this initiative will continue once Federal funds end.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services has worked closely with Protection and Advocacy Services and ATTAIN (Accessing Technology Through Awareness in INdiana) in developing a draft policy regarding Vocational Rehabilitation Services purchase of technology related equipment from the local schools for eligible students.

Since local schools must identify special education students in the eighth grade that potentially will be eligible for and need the services of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, school staff, parents and students must at least think about the option of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and develop an Individual Education Plan/Individual Transition Plan leading up to Vocational Rehabilitation Services involvement. During the Junior or second to last year of high school, Vocational Rehabilitation Services Counselors are to attend the case conference and take an application. An Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan is developed while the student is still in school. As a result of the early development of the Individualized Written Rehabilitation

Plan, it is easier to coordinate the Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan with the Individual Education Plan/Individual Transition Plan. This practice facilitates the development and accomplishment of immediate and long term goals and objectives related to enabling a student to live independently before the student leaves a school setting.

Both the Division of Disability, Aging and Rehabilitative Services/ Vocational Rehabilitation Services Policy Manual and the Indiana Special Education Rules for local school programs have been coordinated to reflect consistent policies and practices related to transition.

The Indiana Special Education Rules, Article 7, Section 4 (b) states that:

The individualized transition plan shall be a part of the individualized education program, shall guide development of the IEP, and shall include a statement of needed transition services that ... shall ... include the individuals and agencies responsible for implementing the activities and services, and if appropriate, a statement of each public agency's responsibilities, or linkages, or both, before the student leaves the school setting.

This Section of Article 7 authorizes the case conference for developing the individualized transition plan to identify "individuals and agencies responsible for implementing" transition related services. Generally speaking, it is the school system's responsibility to take the lead in the provision of transition services while the student is enrolled as a student. The school is responsible for providing a free and appropriate education which includes the provision of transition services.

In the State Agency Cooperative Agreement, it states:

The local educational agency shall assume primary responsibility for the development and implementation of appropriate special education and vocational programs regarding the actual or anticipated opportunities for gainful employment suited to the student's needs, interests and ability to benefit from the program and:

- a. develop vocational skills;
- b. develop independent living skills to the extent possible; and

- c. increase employability following departure from the special education program.

In order to provide guidance to counselors regarding when to begin authorizing for services, the draft Vocational Rehabilitation Services Policy Manual states:

The VR Counselor may authorize:

- (a) for assessment services needed to determine vocational rehabilitation eligibility at any time during or following the school year before the projected final year when application and assessment for determining eligibility for program participation are appropriate in keeping with the paragraphs (E)(3)-(5) preceding; and
- (b) individualized vocational rehabilitation services required for the individual to reach his or her employment outcome, during the last semester of the student exit year, if either limited overlap of job coaching is necessary to aid the transfer of coaching responsibilities (note, however that an overlapping of services does not relieve the school of its obligation to continue vocational services identified in student's IEP), or an appropriate final job placement is unlikely to be secured through planning district services by the end of the final semester of the exit year. Vocational rehabilitation services provided in this context must not interfere with the students completion of the school requirements.

Transition Services are a cooperative effort. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are invited to the case conference in the Junior year and assist with the planning related to transitional services. However, the local education agency takes the lead while the individual is a student, but when the student graduates or leaves the school program, Vocational Rehabilitation Services becomes the lead agency, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Counselor is the responsible party for the provision of transition services.

Article 7 requires outreach to students regarding transition related services to begin at least by the end of the eighth grade or earlier if determined appropriate by the case conference committee. According to Article 7, "The individualized transition plan shall be developed as part of a student's individualized education program by the case conference committee at the annual case review conducted prior to the school year in which non-

disabled students of the same chronological age begin to earn credits toward high school graduation, or earlier if determined appropriate by the case conference committee." It is at this case conference that the committee will review the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and present written information on these services to the student and parent. Also at this time, with the permission of the parent, information regarding students who may need on-going adult services is forwarded to the local Vocational Rehabilitation Services office. It becomes the responsibility of the local Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to track the progress of the student and update this information on an annual basis. When the local office receives information about a student, they then send a follow-up letter to the parent of the student informing them of the program and who to contact should they have questions or issues. A Vocational Rehabilitation Application is to be taken in the Junior year for students needing "on-going" adult services. It is at this point that the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor takes an active role in planning for the transition from school to work. If invited, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor attends the case conferences during the two school years prior to graduation, determines eligibility in the Junior year and develops the Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan in concert with the Individual Education Plan/Individual Transition Plan.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor attempts to contact and inform students in both Special Education and Regular Education by contacting, on a regular basis, school staff such as guidance counselors, as well as teachers and school nurses, and by attending such activities as, but not limited to, Career Day, Adult Service Provider Night, and Parents Night. A brochure and cover letter is sent out annually to all guidance counselors in the local high schools informing them of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and requesting them to inform all students in regular education who might be eligible for the Vocational Rehabilitation Services program.

Evaluation and follow-up on transition services is a requirement being developed and implemented under the Indiana Transition Initiative. Staff have been hired to perform this function in terms of data gathering and evaluating the information collected under what is being called the Indiana Graduate Follow Up System. The Indiana Graduate Follow-Up System is a computer resource tool designed to facilitate the collection of information about former students and their post-school experiences. The summary reports generated by the system can be used to improve local interagency planning and transition services. Vocational Rehabilitation

Services continues to monitor transition clients and services by means of its own internal reports as well.

(3) Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-profit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers

The Division of Disability, Aging and Rehabilitative Services/Vocational Rehabilitation Services currently purchases an array of services from a variety of vendors. Historically, services such as vocational evaluation, work adjustment, placement, and supported employment services have been restricted for purchase through community rehabilitation programs only. VRS has one similar agreement with a private non-profit vendor, whose catchment area includes southwest Indiana.

It is anticipated, through the VRS redesign process, that counselors will be purchasing services from a variety of vendors, opening the market for "non-traditional" providers of these services. In preparation for this, VRS is reviewing the vendor expectations, i.e. qualifications, under the law and regulations, and will be determining the parameters of vendor cooperative agreements.

(4) : Evidence of Collaboration Regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services

Attachment 7.5, effective date October 1, 1997, reflects current agency policy and procedures as required by the 1998 Amendments.

(5): Pursuant to section 101(a)(11)(C) of the Act, efforts are being made to initiate interagency cooperation with and utilization of programs carried out by the Under Secretary of the Department of Agriculture. In part, the Rural Business-Cooperative Service Program assists individuals in receiving loans to develop businesses in rural communities. In the area of Rural Development loans can be secured to acquire housing in rural areas. Vocational Rehabilitation Services will identify those programs within the Department of Agriculture which may be beneficial to customers of Vocational Rehabilitation Services residing in rural communities, and initiate steps to enhance collaboration at the local level between the two agencies to ensure maximum utilization of all available resources.